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UNCLAS TEGUCIGALPA 001602

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [KHLS](#) [CVIS](#) [HO](#) [FAA](#)
SUBJECT: BIRDSTRIKE DAMAGES JPATS ENGINE; NO INJURIES

¶1. A Department of Homeland Security Boeing 737 completing a Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS) mission to Honduras encountered a vulture on takeoff from Tegucigalpa's Toncontin airport yesterday. The bird was sucked into the plane's number two engine, setting the engine on fire. The pilot shut down the engine, and rather than attempt to return to Toncontin's notoriously short runway, flew on to make an emergency landing in San Pedro Sula. There were no passenger injuries or damages to the plane except for the engine, which will be replaced. The plane is currently undergoing repairs at the San Pedro Sula airport.

¶2. The flight, which originated in Alexandria, Louisiana, was one of the regularly scheduled JPATS missions returning deportees to Honduras. The plane had dispatched a group of deportees yesterday in Tegucigalpa and was on its way to San Pedro Sula's Ramon Villeda Morales airport for refueling when it struck the vulture. Another JPATS flight was diverted from Guatemala to pick up the crew members and U.S. immigration officials in San Pedro Sula and return them to the U.S.

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